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SHEFFIELD STOLEN

Council paves the way for the future of public sector cuts

A massive cull of thousands of jobs by Sheffield city council is under way and, if successful, it will serve as a template for other local authorities to follow suit in a co-ordinated reduction of public services.

Sheffield council workers have been issued with redundancy notices by the Lib-dem controlled authority as an initial step to cut costs and reduce the council's spending in line with government policy on scaling down public services. This comes after Birmingham city council, the largest local authority in the country and run by the Tories and Lib-dems, issued redundancy notices to all of its 26,000 staff. The process in Sheffield is to formally terminate the contracts of 8,500 council staff, then offer to re-employ the same workers on different contracts with either restricted pay or worse working conditions. This will allow the council to ignore previously agreed, and fought for, working conditions and avoid the need for a negotiated union settlement. If workers refuse the new contracts they will simply lose their jobs.

The authority is under increasing pressure to cut costs and has estimated it will have to find up to £219m over the next four years.

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LENS CAP NOT SO IN THE PINK



The International Union for Conservation of Nature's 'red list' of threatened species has declared a quarter of all plant species are now facing extinction due to mass deforestation in a new landmark study. At the same time, UK photographers snapped a rare pink hippo, apparently the first ever to be spotted in Kenya.

HARINGEY COMES OUT FIGHTING

The Universities and College Union (UCU) organised a protest outside the college of North East London, Tottenham, as part of the European Day of Action Against Cuts on 29th September. It was supported by Haringey Alliance for Public Services, and Haringey Solidarity Group, and was one of several demonstrations planned in the run up to the big protest march and rally on Monday 18th October in Wood Green, on the eve of the council budget which is set to bring massive cuts to public services in Haringey.

With a megaphone, some percussion, chants and placards, the spirited protest attracted a lot of interest from locals and a large group of students who watched and listened to speeches and took leaflets. The protests are hoping to highlight the massive

programme of cuts, closures and privatisation threats planned by the council that will devastate local services and threaten countless jobs in the area.

Elsewhere across Europe, as part of the day of action, there were riots in Barcelona with major transport disruption across Spain by striking workers in the country's first general strike in eight years, while demonstrators in Brussels surrounded the EU building in solidarity. Strikes or protests also took place in Greece, Portugal, Ireland, Slovenia and Lithuania. In Dublin, a man rammed a cement mixer into the gates of the Irish parliament in protest at the country's expensive bank bailout. Written across the truck's barrel in red letters were the words: 'Toxic Bank Anglo'.

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NEWS

IN BRIEF

DEFENCE: Perhaps fearing the bottom is falling out of the weapons of mass destruction market, BAE are branching out into cyberspace to provide security systems for the FBI at \$40 million a throw.

After years of selling the latest killing machines to rogue states (including the USA and UK) BAE are now entering into a whole new market. "We're serving as the gatekeepers for the FBI in the cyber world," they boast. In 2009 BAE Systems reported sales of £22.4 billion.

EDUCATION: Students at university are facing a massive increase in tuition fees which could break the £10,000 barrier by next year.

At present tuition fees are set at £3,290 per year, but a review chaired by Lord Browne on the future of university funding is suggesting that fees could be raised to £7,000 per year, with the option of a further £3,000.

The multi-millionaire Browne and one-time boss of BP maintains "Despite the prospect of fees more than doubling, most would-be students would still seek to attend university."

IMMIGRATION: Another high court battle is on the cards over the government's attempt to introduce a cap on immigration levels.

The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants are seeking a judicial review and asking the courts to declare the government's temporary cap on migrants, imposed on 28th June, unlawful because ministers couldn't be bothered to tell Parliament how it was going to be done. Details were then posted on the Home Office website but never presented to Parliament.

The court of appeal has already ruled that the Home Secretary acted unlawfully when changes were made to the points-based immigration system without proper parliamentary approval.

ROYAL MAIL: Vince Cable, the Lib-dem business minister, is offering postal workers a sweetener of a 10% share scheme to ease through the process of selling off the service.

Under the deal, all Royal Mail workers would receive shares in the newly privatised company, making them 'part-owners' with the bankers and investors set to buy-out the business, according to the politician.

It's perhaps churlish to suggest Royal Mail is at present already fully owned by the public.

TORTURE: The Equality and Human Rights Commission has advised the government that its new guidance on torture may violate UK and international law, and it has warned the government that it is preparing to mount a challenge in the courts.

The guidance was published following evidence that UK security and intelligence officers involved in counter terrorism operations may have been complicit in the torture of detainees by foreign governments.

LENS CAP IN DEEP WATER



Despite the multi-million pound deal with the FBI, BAE Systems has warned that shipbuilding in the Govan dockyard, Glasgow, could be badly hit by reductions in naval cash. The project to build the two new giant aircraft carriers, which BAE is the main contractor, has been touted as a potential victim of the public spending cuts.

Thessaloniki appeal

The appeal trial for the Thessaloniki Four has been adjourned

The appeal trial of the Thessaloniki Four, including London activist Simon Chapman, has been postponed until 14th January 2011, after police arrested one of the defendants for allegedly taking part in an armed robbery. A panel of judges took just 20 minutes to suspend the trial on Friday 24th September 2010, due the police failing to present Michalis Traikapis to the court of Thessaloniki.

The four defendants were amongst 29 protesters arrested during the demonstrations against the European Union summit in Thessaloniki, Greece's second city, in 2003. They were found guilty in January 2008 and sentenced to between five and eight and a half years each.

During the build up towards the summit, the national media saturated the coverage of the protests with scare stories, with the police introducing security measures throughout the city. During the main day of demonstrations, police attacked the front of the march with huge amounts of military grade Israeli tear gas.

Simon Chapman, was attacked whilst being disoriented from the gas. He was brought to the floor by batons and kick repeated by Greek MAT riot police. He suffered multiple cuts to his head. A live video of the event was broadcast by Greek television. The coverage showed police

displaying two black bags to the television cameras, filled with petrol bombs and placing two hammers in them. These bags were later placed next to Simon, who was forced to carry them. Photographic evidence later emerged confirming Simon's statement saying that he was carrying a light blue rucksack which had nothing more than water bottles in it.

The current four defendants were part of the original seven, known as the Thessaloniki Seven, who were remanded straight after their initial arrests in June 2003. After appeals were made and lost to have them released, five of the seven undertook a heroic hunger strike lasting between 56 and 64 days. Whilst outside the prison, large demonstrations and actions took place throughout Greece, Europe and the World. On 26th November 2003, an order was made to release the seven. It still stands as one of the most important solidarity campaigns under taken by anarchists in recent years.

The Thessaloniki Four Solidarity Group was set up to support the four defendants, Souleiman 'Kastro' Dakduk, Fernando Perez Gorraiz, Michalis Traikapis and Simon Chapman and are committed to their freedom from prosecution. Though only Traikapis is in prison, the campaign needs both financial and political support as the time approaches for the appeal hearing in January.

For more information, and to pledge a donation for legal costs, or for message of support, you can contact them at thessalonikisolidarity@gmail.com



County councils declare class war

Cuts begin in Suffolk as 'austerity' becomes 'sell-off'

As an initial step towards the eventual sell-off and outsourcing of all its functions, Suffolk County Council is set to all but close its Youth Services division, an insider has whispered to *Freedom*.

Called into a meeting recently, our source was told that as of April next year all youth provision workers were to be made redundant, with a tiny proportion invited to reapply for their jobs as part of a "life or death cases" skeleton service.

Although the precise numbers to go are unclear, our insider estimated the number of jobs to go as being in "the low hundreds."

With the rural council looking to slash up to 30% off its budget over the next few years it opened its account in September by announcing that a new "virtual government

for the age of austerity" would have to be implemented, hyping privatisation while carefully glossing over the method they were planning to use to make this happen – wholesale cutbacks to services.

Hand-wringing in the *Guardian* newspaper aside, however, this is not a new idea, even in the county itself – and was roundly supported by New Labour when it was in power.

Freedom first reported in 2007 on Suffolk County Council's plans laid out by accounting giant KPMG, to outsource all but 700 of the 11,000 council jobs in existence, which were pored over, approved and then quietly shelved as it became clear that they were unaffordable. Prices for provision would have soared unless massive cutbacks to services were made.

Similar stories have been told across Britain, including in Newcastle and Essex, which shortlisted two companies last year for a £5.4 billion contract over eight years in 2009 with the plan of cutting up to 6,500 posts.

In the past these attempts were undermined by the sheer nakedness of cutbacks at a time when income was rising for the council and it was expected that services and safety nets remain of a high standard. Losing services could not be justified.

Now however there is the perfect foil to such questions – cuts are happening because they must, and privatisation is the key.

In reality, privatisation is the method by which the status quo in public sector employment, long protected by complex contracts and laws, will be stripped away along with thousands of jobs – and hundreds of thousands should government cuts become a reality.

The process will cost more in taxes to create a worse service and put massive pressure on what services are left. Effectively this is another method of class war, using the argument that an earlier phase of that same war has made it impossible to do anything else.

Rob Ray

Sheffield stolen

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The financial picture will become clearer after the Government's public spending review is published on 20th October, but public sector workers see this current move as a direct attack on essential frontline services, including housing and education.

Why Sheffield is relevant is they have also been given the go ahead by the government to borrow millions of pounds to finance major new projects and regenerate a large part of the city, which Nick Clegg, deputy prime minister and Sheffield MP, announced at the Lib-dem party conference last month to thunderous applause.

Under the plans, the council will be allowed to establish so-called Accelerated Development

Zones (ADZ) around prime locations in the city which would involve taking out series of multi million pound tax-payer funded loans to pay for the infrastructure improvements needed to attract new businesses, but risking even greater debt. Sheffield is to be the experiment that will define how local authorities re-organise their financial commitments under the coalition's new policy agenda.

Ironically Birmingham city council have also been talking with the Treasury about the possibility of Birmingham setting up Accelerated Development Zones. Their £10 billion Big City Plan which would involve selling off the city's assets such as the NEC

and real estate land to private buyers and foreign investors where the council would borrow against the rate income paid by new businesses. It is unclear whether both Birmingham and Sheffield council's were forced into the position of sacking its workforce as a necessary requirement of them being awarded these development zones.

What is clear is this integrated policy of wholesale restructuring of the public sector is not simply a reaction to the need to cut spending but a planned government strategy to limit the power of the public sector workforce and eventually force those jobs permanently into the private sector.

ANALYSIS

What is the role of the ABC?

The Anarchist Black Cross has been around for over a century now and, like many other organisations, its role has changed over time. It started as the Anarchist or Political Red Cross sometime between 1900–05 to provide aid to comrades in Tsarist Russia and grew from there, changing its name to avoid confusion with the International Red Cross in post-Revolutionary Russia. It continued to send aid to anarchist prisoners in Russia but became an increasingly intermittent presence on the international scene during the 1930s, often under different names, as donations became scarcer and the remaining anarchist in the Russian prison system were finally killed in the Stalinist Terror.

The ABC name was resurrected in the late 1960s, when Stuart Christie and Albert Meltzer set up a group to provide support to anarchists in the prisons of Francoist Spain. From London, the ABC idea gradually spread across Europe and then the Atlantic, eventually forming an international network of often short-lived groups. Even before the end of the Franco regime, ABC groups had begun to widen their purview, supporting prisoners from the wider anarchist movement and other class struggle prisoners. And this involvement of ABC groups with other non-anarchist class struggle prisoners has often been criticised by some within the anarchist movement, but is in reality a natural development of our involvement in prisoner support in general.

Not every country is witness to a high level of active anarchist resistance against the state, the sort of thing that produces a steady stream of movement prisoners that demand our support. But, even where there are high numbers, those same prisoners inevitably develop ties with other class struggle prisoners by being involved in resistance against prison regimes alongside them. Unfortunately, many in the movement, often those with no experience of prison life, dismiss these prisoners as 'social prisoners', as though they



are incapable of developing an active class-based political consciousness and are therefore not worthy of our support and solidarity.

It has been the experience of those rare long-term anarchist prisoners in this country, as well as those, for example, in the USA where there is a vast swathe of long-term non-anarchist prisoners, imprisoned for their political activities since the '60s or who have become involved in radical and class-struggle based resistance whilst inside, that one finds comrades in struggle where one can. And the dictates of mutual aid and solidarity require one's comrades outside prison to share those principles.

If we are to build an active anarchist presence in society, one of the first places we should be doing this is inside the prison walls. So if we cannot find it in our ideologically

pure hearts to show some solidarity to those on the inside who continue to resist the state's frontline weapon against non-conformity and dissent, even if they have come to that non-conformity and dissent late in life and do not necessarily call themselves anarchists, then we are not really worthy of the mutual aid and solidarity that we expect our comrades to show us.

The Brighton and Bristol ABC groups are holding a meeting entitled 'What is the role of the Anarchist Black Cross?' at 1pm in Room LG7 at the London Anarchist Bookfair on 23rd October to discuss this and other issues concerning the future of the ABC network. We'd also like to recommend the John Barker meeting at 12 noon in Lecture Room One, where he will be reading from his book of prison experiences, *Bending The Bars*.

London Anarchist Bookfair: other highlights

Along with the ABC and John Barker meetings are a whole host of interesting talks, workshops and discussions going on at this year's bookfair.

The big name speaker is John Pilger, best known for his documentaries on the Vietnam war and Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge. He has been particularly outspoken about the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine, and for his criticisms of western economic policies in developing countries. He will be talking to a member of the Bookfair collective about the current state of the world.

Another likely big draw is the BBC's *Newsnight* journalist Paul Mason, who will

be debating with Hillel Ticktin, editor of *Critique*, on: 'Will Cameron's cuts lead to working class defeat or to a new anti-capitalist movement?' It's due to last just under two hours, which will no doubt allow the two intellectual heavyweights a chance to land some decisive blows.

Anti-cuts seems to be a consistent theme running through a lots of the talks this year, with the AF proposing a radical responses to the cuts agenda, National Shop Steward Network bringing their ideas about how to re-build a workers movement, and the IWW discussing workplace struggles and solidarity with precarious workers.

There is also a massive amount of diversity to be found amongst the small room meetings, from anti-police activities to how to set up a co-op. And it's this openness to different aspects of our political movement – our ability embrace, absorb and acknowledge different ideas from different perspectives – that continues to make the London bookfair an essential destination for all those interested in radical politics.

The London Anarchist Bookfair will be on Saturday 23rd October from 10am until 7pm at Queen Mary, University of London, Mile End Road, London, E1 4NS See <http://www.anarchistbookfair.org.uk/>

IN BRIEF

ANTI-FASCISM: A last minute mobilisation of anti-fascists saw off both the BNP and the Scottish Defence League, who both attempted to hold separate public activity in Glasgow city centre. A large number of anti-fascists descended on the BNP stall, which was kicked over and its contents either seized or torn up. The police were forced to remove the BNP members for their own safety.

DEBT: More than 100 debt-management firms face the prospect of being shut down following a review by Office of Fair Trading which has uncovered "widespread problems" across the industry. It found most companies offered advice which was not in the best interests of the consumer but most profitable to them. Debt management companies are fee-charging agencies who provide advice to over-indebted, vulnerable consumers, unlike free debt-advice charities such as the Citizens Advice Bureau.

DRINK: Workers who drink are far less likely to call in sick than those who don't, according to new medical research. The study by Dutch researchers was designed to discover the relationship between lifestyle and productivity, and suggests that drinking ten glasses of alcohol a week or more was associated with a reduction in sick leave. Not surprisingly, it concluded that an unhealthy workforce affects a company's output and boosts sick leave. Cheers, comrades.

LEADERS: As the party conference season comes to a close, the overriding impression left behind from the various stage-shows is the massive gulf between politicians (of all colours) and the rest of us. As speeches merged into one long barrage against the working class, it's useful to remember the three main party leaders were all educated at Oxbridge, none have held down a serious job outside politics, and all have the privilege of their class to back them up.

POLICE: The company which provided the tasers used by police in the stand-off with gunman Raoul Moat has had its licence revoked by the Home Secretary. It breached its contract by supplying the experimental tasers to police that should have only been available to the Home Office Science and Development branch. The firm, Pro-Tect, also breached rules governing the secure transport of the devices and ammunition.

RAIL: Cleaners and activists gave a rousing chorus of "Hands off our workmates, no one is illegal" as they gathered outside the offices of Initial Rentokil, who supply cleaning services to London Underground, to demonstrate against the company's bullying tactics in threatening migrant workers with the immigration police in order to suppress workplace organising. Workers have been intimidated into accepting poorer conditions because of their status.

Forty years of Black Flag

This is a year of anniversaries. It is 170 years since Proudhon proclaimed himself an anarchist and that "property is theft!" It is twenty years since the poll-tax riot. It is 40 years since *Black Flag* first came out.

Originally associated with the Anarchist Black Cross, *Black Flag* has been an independent magazine for some decades. It was born of a time of intense class struggle and its founders, Stuart Christie and Albert Meltzer, aimed to give revolutionary anarchists a forum. That is still its aim and it is still, we think, Britain's leading anarchist magazine.

We hope to present a lively journal which will interest those seeking to discover more about anarchist ideas and activity but also has something for long-standing activists. Our aim is to produce a mix of analysis of current events, theoretical contributions, articles on key moments of our history and reviews. We hope to produce a magazine for current activists as well as link to the voices from our past (our 'revolutionary reprint' feature which has, so far, included Errico Malatesta, Murray Bookchin, Ethel MacDonald, Emma Goldman and John Most).

Issue 231 is currently on-sale now (available from Freedom and many other radical bookshops, and also on-line at www.akuk.com). As well as an interview with Stuart Christie, we have a mix of articles and reviews on subjects and books of interest to all radicals. It discusses electoral abstentionism, libertarian approaches to health, includes tributes to both Colin Ward and Howard Zinn and celebrates the 1990 anti-poll-tax riot. We also

mark the 100th anniversary of Kropotkin's entry on anarchism for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* with a discussion of this classic introduction and summary of our ideas and movement. And lots more.

Issue 232 is being prepared now and we are seeking help from those who wish *Black Flag* to continue. We aim to be a non-sectarian forum for discussion and analysis for all revolutionary libertarians, although with a firm focus on revolutionary anarchism (communist-anarchism, anarcho-sindicalism, etc.). We also aim to increase our frequency and distribution.

However, we still need help to produce *Black Flag*. We are a small collective and we are always looking for comrades to write, edit and otherwise get involved. We have formed links with the Anarchist Federation (which contributes articles to their own dedicated pages) and aim to extend that to other organisations. We need people to write, take bundles to sell, to proof-read, maintain our webpage and a host of other tasks which are required to make a magazine not only survive but to grow.

We are aiming to become quarterly, but that goal depends on our readers actively *participating* rather than passively *consuming* a product. If you are a class struggle anarchist, like *Black Flag* and wish it to not only continue but flourish into the regular and frequent magazine of our movement needs, please get in touch.

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INTERNATIONAL

IN BRIEF

BURMA: Reports say that the persecuted democracy activist Aung San Suu Kyi will be released in November when her house arrest term expires. The country will witness its second general election since 1990. However, Suu Kyi, who has been under house arrest and hard labour on and off for the past 20 years, will not be standing for the election, sources say.

BELGIUM: In Brussels around 100,000 people marched on EU buildings, demonstrating against the coming cuts and austerity measures. The march was called by the European Trade Union Confederation.

CHILE: The relatives of 27 of the 33 miners who have been trapped in a collapsed mine-shaft since 5th August have decided to sue the mining company and the Chilean state. They aim to obtain at least a million US dollars for each miner.

The mine was closed in 2007 after a fatal accident, but re-opened in 2008. The lawsuit has been filed despite the government freezing the assets of the mining company, San Esteban.

IRELAND: The government's rescue of its financial sector (read banks) will hit a whopping 40 billion Euros (£34 billion), shooting up its budget deficit to 32% of its GDP.

One of the banks in question is the Anglo Irish Bank, which tried to become fat by lending loans during the housing bubble.

The bailout amounts to 5% of the total wealth produced by the country, making it the worst affected European country.

KYRGYZSTAN: In an unfolding drama of strengthened states and new imperialisms across the world, Russia is now moving into this central Asian country, part of the former Soviet Union. After consolidating its paws in Ukraine and Armenia, Russia now has 49 years staying power in Kyrgyzstan, and has agreed to show its gratitude to the latter's defence minister in the form of generous amounts of arms and military equipment.

THAILAND: Four and half months after the violent protests ended, the Emergency Decree enforced since March 2010 is still in force in parts of the country, and being used to silence dissenting voices. Detained protestors are still languishing in prison, tortured and without lawyers. Meanwhile, the government is plotting for a further three-month renewal of the decree.

ZIMBABWE: In addition to the 700,000 people forcibly evicted from their land and homes in the last five years, 20,000 more are facing eviction. Poor, vulnerable people living in informal settlements who fail to pay unjustly high lease rates are being continually evicted by the government in an operation called Murambatsvina.

LENS CAP MEXICO



Heavy rains have caused massive landslides in two states in Mexico so far, Oaxaca and Chiapas. Evacuation is underway even as sixteen people have died in Chiapas, with several others buried in the mud.

500,000 Cuban Workers Sacked

It is back to the future in Cuba. The President-General Raul Castro, who succeeded Fidel in 2008, recently announced his plan to lay off half a million public sector workers, and eventually remove half a million more in his bid to create a 'free market' and improve economic 'efficiency'. The cuts will affect all government sector workers.

In a shameful admission, Fidel Castro said that the Cuban model of economy "doesn't even work for us anymore," even though he later claimed that it meant the opposite. The CTC, Cuba's only union, joined in the chorus saying, "Our state neither can nor should continue maintaining companies ... with inflated payrolls and losses that are a drag on the economy, are counterproductive, generate bad habits and deform worker's performance." Maybe they stole the words from Thatcher.

Some 85% of the workers are in the state sector in Cuba. Where even barber shops are state-owned, Raul expects the sacked workforce to be simply absorbed almost overnight into a private sector of leased lands, 'co-operatives' and self-employment that is yet to be created. If the workers refuse to accept alternative jobs they will be given unemployment benefits of up to 70% of their wage only up to three months. After that they are left to themselves.

Eventual plans also include cutting state subsidies, removal of cap on maximum income, and (dare I say) the whole capitalist gamut. The workers who are lucky enough to hold on to their jobs will be 'paid according to results'. Even benefits will be paid according to seniority, and not according to need. However, education and health services remain free. For now.

Notes from the US

Let's start with some good news – the environmental 'whistleblower' group Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, (PEER), filed a lawsuit in late September with the purpose of having government documents on the size of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in April caused by BP's leased Deepwater Horizon rig, released in full. PEER wants to discover whether or not government officials deliberately withheld scientific data. Propaganda outlets in the US have been repeatedly suggesting that the oil has all but disappeared and the disaster was

more minor than at first thought.

In March 2008 environmental activist Briana Waters was sentenced to six years in prison and ordered to pay US\$6 million (£3.8 million) in 'restitution' for her part in the alleged arson at the University of Washington seven years earlier. In mid September a three-judge panel of the Ninth US Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the judge in the original case had made numerous errors compromising Waters' right to a fair trial. While not exonerated, it's

Spain goes on day-long strike

Spain is facing the axe, but Spain is not liking it. Following the call for a 24-hour strike by trade unions, CNT, UGT and CCOO, workers all over Spain quit work on the 29th September, and took to the streets. According to the unions, around ten million, or half the workforce, took part in marches and demonstrations in more than 80 cities and towns across the country. This is the first general strike in Spain since 2002.

Unsurprisingly, with the riot police out in full force, there were a few skirmishes between the police and the protesters. In central Barcelona students burnt down a police car and barricaded the streets with rubbish bins prompting some police officers to fire rubber bullets. However, few injuries and arrests have been reported.

Although some workers refused to take part in the strike for fear of losing a day's wage, the strike has been described by union leaders as very successful. Eighty per cent of flights in and out of Spain were cancelled and 80% of all high-speed trains and all mid-distance trains within the country were off the tracks. Garbage went uncollected, and in Barcelona alone 90% of taxi drivers were on strike. Only 25% of commuter trains were working, while protesters spray-painted buses that were on the road and demonstrated outside shops, banks and government offices shouting "Strike! Strike!" Basic emergency services and schools remained functional.

The Socialist government has tried to play down the event by claiming that most of Spain was "operating normally". But the ruling clique of Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero is facing growing public anger over the austerity measures announced in May this year. With a budget deficit of 11%,



Police remove a worker blocking the road in Barcelona before the start of the general strike.

and under pressure from the EU, the parliament passed the austerity bill by a majority of just one vote. It includes a 5% cut to public sector salaries, freezing salaries by 2011, increasing retirement age from 65 to 67, scrapping payment to parents for childbirth, and axing funding to regions by 1.2 billion Euros.

Such unpopular measures, along with the fact that 20% of Spain's population is unemployed (over four million are jobless), have not made the government any dearer. Sounding like a Tory clone, the Finance Minister of Spain, Elena Salgado, describes

the cuts as "painful but inevitable."

But it goes without saying that the cuts are more painful to some than others. A social worker from Madrid, Begona Martinez, who participated in the strike had this to say: "The government is favouring the business class. The banks are still making loads of money, and I'm 38 with a degree and can hardly make it to the end of the month."

With the recent collapse of the labour-intensive construction industry, the choice facing the common worker is not so much between a few bucks more and a few less but between just a little and nothing at all.

Notes from the US

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likely she'll be freed on bail pending a new trial.

Recently-published correspondence appears to demonstrate Obama applying pressure on India to drop claims arising from that [Bhopal] incident in 1984, which killed at least 15,000 people. White House Deputy National Security Adviser Michael Froman appears to link US support for World Bank loans to India to that country's co-operation in going easy up on Dow Chemicals: "We are hearing a lot of noise about the Dow Chemical issue. I trust that you are monitoring it carefully. I am not familiar with all the details, but I think we want to avoid developments which put a chilling effect on our investment relationship."

Finally, some economic news: 2010 is a census year in the US. Data shows that (in 2009) the number of families and individuals

(43.6 million) people living in poverty rose by almost 10% to one in seven, the highest level since the 1960s. Those living in acute poverty (with incomes less than half the poverty line) constitute over 6% of the population, or 20 million. The income gap between richest and poorest grew in 2009 to the widest ever recorded – the top 20% received nearly 50% of all income generated during those 12 months. The gap has increased by 100% since 1968, making income inequality in the US the largest of all Western industrialised nations. More than one in five children lived in poverty – one in three for African American children. Blacks and Latinos were also disproportionately represented in recent deportation figures: in 2009, 393,000 people were deported, a record for the seventh consecutive year. Three-quarters were Latinos.

Louis Further

Repression of Chilean Indians

As Mapuche Indians' confrontation with corporate interests has grown more violent, Chile's nominally Socialist government has sought to blunt the indigenous movement by invoking a modified version of an anti-terrorist law that dates from the dictatorship of Pinochet.

Despite international protests, 18 Mapuche leaders are scheduled to go on trial soon – the charges stem from a series of incidents during the past seven years in which groups of Mapuches have burned forests or farmhouses or destroyed forestry equipment and trucks. The activists, who are demanding the status of political prisoners began a hunger strike on 12th July, and were gradually joined by others, bringing the total to 38.

The strike, now approaching its 80th day, has put much of the country on edge and brought national and international coverage of Chile's 'Mapuche problem' as never before.

FEATURE

Ghost Dancers: The miners last

We publish exclusive extracts from the third and final volume of Dave Douglass's autobiographical trilogy

Dave Douglass's three volume autobiography – from the poor childhood upbringing of *Geordies Wa Mental*, to the sixties and seventies revolutionary overload of *The Wheels Still in Spin* up to *Ghost Dancers* – covers all the important social and political changes of the past 50 years from a defiantly working class perspective. But it is perhaps the 1984 miners strike, and his pivotal role in that struggle, that stands out as a testament to his political beliefs and life-long commitment to the mining communities and union that he fought so hard to preserve. Anne Scargill, ex-wife of NUM leader Arthur, paid no greater tribute when she said “*Ghost Dancers* is the most accurate presentation of the 1984–85 strike and the decade of struggle which followed it, I have ever read or heard.”

On flying pickets

As our pickets sweep into the neighbouring coalfields, serious fighting erupts at Ollerton and Thoresby. At Ollerton, the pickets had arrived quietly the night before in dribs and drabs, hid their cars and slept in the woods. Only a skeleton force of cops was in place as the pickets emerged from the woods and threw back the day shift ... A legal injunction was served against the Yorkshire area preventing us picketing (except at each respective pit). We ignored it ... Doncaster was producing the highest number and quality of pickets, up for anything and brave to a fault. It was clear to me we were up against the concerted effort of the national police operation, directed through the state's special forces and with more than a hint of military involvement. We were in a situation

where we were fighting a better equipped and normally more numerous enemy. So, of course, we used classic guerrilla tactics: secrecy, hit and run, mass pickets switching from one site to another one county to another, or spreading out to hit all the pits of one region, then regrouping to take all the pickets to one target.

On the women's support groups

On 12th May in Barnsley, 10,000 women, miners wives, daughters, granddaughters, sisters and mothers, rallied in an unprecedented demonstration of solidarity and support. ‘Wor Maureen’ was speaking for Hatfield Main Women's Support Group at the mass women's rally, now quite unfazed by masses upon masses of people. One of the principal speakers, Maureen, made the most important speech of her life, and one which captured exactly the views of those women who had taken the lead from the bottom up to first of all create this body, and then fight to give it political and social dimensions far beyond those who had first tried to suppress it, and then ultimately tried to control it. She spoke from this platform straight into the ranks of our wild and unruly pickets who hadn't yet thought through what sort of commitment they owed in return to the women...

Having demonstrated that the women would come into this struggle on their own terms, she spoke to the women directly, who hung on her every word. “What we are doing as women in this 1984, maybe 1985, miners' strike is making history. We are setting a pattern for the future, for the involvement of women in political struggle, which will show what a formidable force we can be. Without our organised support this strike can't win; but we also want the active support of the whole trade union and labour movement, and all of us can work to win this support ... None of us here will be daunted by hardship, no matter what difficulties we face, for certain we will win.”

This was part of the struggle within the



Above left, miners on the march; above right, Orgreave, Dave Douglass outside Hatfield Colliery in a

struggle, to fight for a better understanding of the cause of women's liberation, and to improve the consciousness of the miners and see other people's struggles as related.

On not having a national ballot

One thing that has dumbfounded most of the subsequent writers and contemporary observers of this great movement is the actual structure of the miners' union. Without an understanding of this, it's hard for anyone to gauge how things happened. The NUM is not as its title suggests a 'national union' in the ordinary meaning of the phrase ... It was a federation of separate areas and constituent bodies, each self-governing and individually registered as independent unions in their own right...

Our plan was to achieve a *de facto* national strike of area strikes. This had not been planned as such; it was simply the way the struggle evolved. Some on the NEC thought the rolling strike would be an initial phase to be endorsed by national individual ballot later as the strike gained momentum. However, when branches were polled at mass pithead meetings, as to approval for such a ballot or not, the overwhelming majority of branches, and through them areas, voted to reject such a national ballot as unnecessary...

From the beginning, defying the strike or it making it a point of principle – ‘no ballot no strike’ – was always an excuse for cowardice. The issue and the fact of the strike was far more important than how it was achieved ... One historic fact, which must be made clear, is that the NEC and the National leadership under the chairmanship of Arthur Scargill made no recommendation to reject a national ballot ... when put to the vote, it achieves 69 in favour and 54 against. The decision *not* to have a national ballot



generation



above; below left, women protesting against pit closures at a rally in London, June 1984; below sit-down to block the route of the scab-carrying bus in August 1984.



carried. It is carried by an exhausting debate and exploration of opinions by all areas, all constituent parts and all branches. It is a democratic decision.

On political groups

When I came to start up the Beecham's Miners Support Group, with financial sponsorship from Class War, and militant anarchist and gays and lesbians group Wolverine down in London, Spot and the lads were all too glad to meet visiting delegations and accept donations. Most of it went on beer rather than food, but that was their choice ... As the strike continued and picketing became more vexed, Class War and the London Anarchists also dropped us special orders as we requested them, a consignment of Black Widow catapults and boxes of steel ball bearings. A prize group of volunteers in a flying hit squad made full use of these...

On the battle of Orgreave

Arthur [Scargill] called a secret planning meeting up in the national executive office. I was one of the esteemed conspirators, along with ... representatives from all the striking coalfields clustered around the table on which sat a big and actual plan of the Orgreave coking plant. The plan for 18th June involved mobilising all the pickets nationwide, and as many workers as we could muster on the same day, at the same time, with the 'Close the Gates' determination which shut Saltley and batted down the loose corners of the 1972 strike. We would split into three forces. Arthur would lead group one at the top gate, the rest of the country, north Yorkshire and Barnsley would attack the bottom gate, while I would lead Doncaster and south Yorkshire from two assembly points into the rear of the plant and take the loading bays...

Just as we approached the back of the plant, the great throng of South Yorkshire men appeared over the old pit tip and charged down to meet us ... There was no time for ripostes, the back doors were open and in we charged, trashing trains and loosing the bottoms out of waiting trucks of coal and coke. Suddenly a thin line of short-shield cops, their long batons over their heads, marched in a single line abreast towards us. Barry Miller, the diehard Goldthorpe secretary, ran to a pile of abandoned fence posts and picked one up and shouted "C'mon lads - we can play this game", and a number of us picked up lumps of wood and stakes and advanced towards the cops. Two or three of the police dogs were now bounding about and barking and falling over themselves and clearly scared shitless at the angry herd of men marching towards them, chanting "Oot! Oot! Oot! Oot!" like a tribal blood bond.

On the miners themselves

There are 150,000 individual stories of the strike. That year, how it impacted on individual families in all of its tragic, proud, gut-wrenching, comic, exhilarating, fearful, desperate, heroic and indescribable emotional variants is another story. That story, told well and in necessary detail, would fill volumes and every page would resist the gross stereotyping of the strikers which the media, sympathetic as well as hostile, have made out for us since the strike has ended. Very few strikers or their families ever went near a picket line. For those that did, few pickets were ever violent, and most were humdrum and boring, at least until the government decided to open up a second front by seeking to put a scab into every pit. Then an occupation army arrived and all the paraphernalia of flying pickets and

confrontation landed on the doorstep every day. Then the ordinary men and women and their kids in the coalfield experienced something they never thought they would in their lives: an alien armed force on their streets, patrolling their towns and villages, threatening, arrogant, often insulting and provocative.

The strike was marked by quiet stoicism and a determination not to buckle, not to let the side down, reflected in the resolve of hundreds of thousands of individuals, standing together firstly as families, and without great back-slapping and public displays, as conscious members of a living community in continuity with mining union tradition.

On the cost of the miners' strike

9,808 arrested, 10,372 charges, including three killings, four criminal damage with intent to endanger life, three explosive charges, five threats to kill. 200 given prison sentences. 882 sacked for 'violence and sabotage', 967 for striking. 20,000 miners hospitalised. Two killed on the picket line. One scab driver killed. One killed by a scab years later. Three died digging for waste coal. Three suicides rather than break the strike.

Dave will be down at this year's London anarchist bookfair, on Saturday 23rd October, with the three volumes of his autobiography. I suggest you start saving now and buy all three. History may never be recounted the same way again. *Stardust and Coaldust - Geordies Wa Mental*, £9.95, *The Wheel's Still in Spin*, £12.95, and *Ghost Dancers*, £12.95, all published by Christie Books.



COMMENT

ABOUT FREEDOM

ANGEL ALLEY

Readers with long memories may recall us announcing the publication of a book to be called *Beating the Fascists*, which was due out on the 28th July!

More recently, *Beating the Fascists: The Untold History of Anti-Fascist Action* (to give the book its full title), was going to be released on 4th October and, as the 4th October has now come and gone, readers may be pardoned for wondering what's happened. Well, to quote Lando Calrissian "We're a small outpost and not very self-sufficient. We've had supply problems of every kind. We've had labour difficulties..." Anyhow it's gone off to the printers and we've had the proofs back, and we are now launching it on the 23rd October.

So, short of the Somali Pirates seizing the shipment on its way back, or Carter-Ruck slapping an injunction on us, the title will be out for the Anarchist Bookfair.

The cover price is £15, but anyone who reserved a copy while the short-lived pre-publication offer will have their copy reserved at £10. Since this was all a bit of a mess and loads of you have been waiting for far too long, we have decided to have a special offer of £10 on the day of the bookfair only.

Like all our other titles, it will be available from the website, post free, from the end of October.

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NEXT ISSUE

The next issue will be dated 22nd October 2010 and the last day to get copy to us for that issue will be Thursday 14th October. You can send your articles to us by email to copy@freedompress.org.uk or by post addressed to 'The Editors', Freedom, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

A sideways look

by SVARTFROSK

It's long been true that only those with wealth can access certain careers. The wealthy and the well-connected find themselves working as interns for national newspapers or media organisations; the arts and almost all creative areas of work are dominated by those who have the time and space to work at it.

In the last decade or so, competition for any sort of start in a career in politics, the media or just generally anything creative has meant that 'internships' have grown. I spoke to a friend's daughter not long ago who is doing one for an NGO in the hope of getting a job later on. Like so many of her generation she has been to university, then returned home to her parents in despair at ever getting a job, coupled with all the debt that a university education now commands.

She was well aware of the iniquity of the whole intern system. The default position for interns is one of independent wealth – sufficient to live in London without an income. She's lucky that her parents support her while she's doing it, and at least appreciates it. She pointed out it was not just class and income that excludes people from these – it is also distance. Someone from the north or west without connections in London stands no chance.

So, internships entrench privilege and class power. It's no surprise that many of the current Parliamentary elite have come through such routes – Cameron, Clegg and Miliband have all done it – but then none of them have ever been short of a bob or two.

When I started work, in a much less glamorous sector in the 1980s, there was some pressure to ensure that such unearned advantage didn't count when people were taken on. It was obviously imperfect, but

underpinning the best examples of equal opportunities thinking was the idea that academic qualifications gained by public school cramming counted for less than real world experiences and understanding. I think the debt that anyone with a degree now carries weighs heavily and explains some of the desperation for well-paid jobs that employers exploit.

But at least up until now, it only involved certain jobs – interesting ones that middle class people can talk about at dinner parties. It's the same with the public services that Cameron thinks will be run by volunteers – it's always things like libraries that people want to volunteer for, never refuse collection or cleaning old peoples' homes.

But then the Metropolitan police announced it was only going to accept recruits who were already 'specials'. For those of you who don't know, specials are volunteer coppers who basically do it for fun (or a sense of civic duty). They're not paid. The Met reckon that the average time spent working as a special to have a chance of being recruited as a proper copper would be 18 months.

Critics of the scheme have pointed out, quite rightly, that this would deter certain groups of people from applying to the Metropolitan Police. Presumably they mean that the Met will fill up with chinless types who can afford to work for nothing in London for a year and a half. Protecting the rights of private property over people requires either payment or a strong identification with private property. The government are gambling on the latter if they neglect the former. Demonstrations in five to ten years' time could prove very interesting.



Artbeat special officer on patrol around London's Portobello Market.

An anarchist response to sexual violence

First of all I want to thank Ellenor Hutson for having the courage to share with us her horrible experiences at an “anarchist space” (letters, *Freedom*, 25th September), but we should also be grateful to her for pointing out the very real failings of this ludicrous idea that we have to have an anarchist alternative to everything. Anarchist food, anarchist social space, anarchist this, anarchist that. Want to learn a martial art? Let’s start an anarchist group. Don’t go down the local gym, we might get pushed around by those rough workers or, worse still, have our ideas on something challenged. Get out into the real world guys – and sink or swim. Most of the time, of course, all this is harmless, laughable at worst, but in the case of dealing with sexual assault it could be traumatic and even highly dangerous.

So what would I have done in Ellenor’s case? Surely not turn to The State for help? Too fucking right I would.

I do hope that if there was a serious accident in Whitechapel High Street, that none of us would be found waiting around for the anarchist ambulance to arrive.

Ray Hulm.

By the seaside

When Caroline Lucas became the first Green MP, for Brighton Pavilion, she praised the “independent spirit” of Brighton in her maiden parliamentary speech. Of course, Kropotkin, who founded *Freedom*, lived here – his name gets on the buses – partly why Brighton got nicknamed the Kremlin-by-the-sea.

But, contrary to Brighton’s image of independence, tolerance or progress, to begin with, it has the highest level of race attacks in Sussex – higher than nearby Crawley, which has 12% ethnic minorities. If Brighton is so tolerant, why does it have a below national average percentage of ethnic minorities of about 4%? Why is it one of the worst places in the South for attacks on language students?

This should all follow from the fact that it is *not* a quiet, sleepy village – its levels of violence, break-ins, etc., are very high. Yet again, Brighton is the UK drug death capital. Hence it crawls with smack-heads, beggars and prostitutes, making it seem tolerant. But the smack-heads seek soft targets in the tourists and outsiders, so they are burgled, mugged, robbed, etc. – all racially-motivated incidents!

This Brightonian exploitation of outsiders should come as no surprise, as much of its economy depends on tourism. And Brighton has a very high cost of living, comparable to London – and no London weighting on its wages. Why? Not designed to exploit foreigners, by any chance? Being Britain’s biggest fashion centre attracts a myriad of trendies. But work here and you find a plethora of badly paid jobs in retail and

catering. Hence the café’s are crewed by overseas workers – further racist exploitation.

Brighton’s trendies are scarcely tolerant, as fashion shows contempt for the unfashionable. Brightonians tend to be aggressive and arrogant – hence, walk around in a turban or a Muslim veil and you will be abused. Unless you dress right, you don’t get into the clubs.

Brightonians walk around in a smug, right-on, laid-back dream that theirs is a tolerant, progressive, eco-friendly place, much of which is the tourism chiefs’ propaganda. Its high rents, high prices and low wages show how progressive its landlords and capitalists are. If Brighton is eco-friendly, why does it have the worst air-pollution in Sussex? That is its eco-friendly residents over-using their cars! Why is Brighton one of the most light-polluted places in the South? Do its residents not

care about their carbon footprint?

Evidence that Brighton is tolerant is alleged by a gay population. But gays are just as racist as anyone else and are commonly sexist (disliking the opposite sex) and heterophobic. And, of course, gays provide another source of cheap labour.

Look to Brighton’s origins for proof of how progressive it is. Children working in starvation conditions in factories and mines were taxed in order to pay the massive debts incurred by George IV on his Pavilion, his clothes, banquets, food, and his drug addiction. Brighton got into the record books for being the safest parliamentary seat in 1931 – the Tories had a 75,000 majority at about the time the Left first had MPs (e.g. Communists winning Motherwell).

M. Chapman
A Brighton local

[But perhaps not ‘a Brighton local’ for much longer – The Editors.]

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GETTING ACTIVE

PRISON NEWS

The latest proposal for the new Justice Secretary's fêted 'Rehabilitation Revolution', which is due to be outlined in a Green Paper in November, is the idea that prisoners should be compelled to pay compensation out of their prison wages into a central victims' fund.

This idea dates back to 1991 and the recommendations made in the Woolf Report into the Strangeways prisoners uprising and was recently resurrected in a report published by failed Tory leader Ian Duncan Smith's think-tank, the Centre for Social Justice (CJS), and entitled 'Locked Up Potential', a source of much of the Coalition's new penal policy.

The idea is to use the Prisoners' Earnings Act, passed in 1996 but never implemented by the government, and which was originally designed to introduce provisions allowing for the deduction of income tax, national insurance, court order payments, child maintenance, etc.

However, given that the average prisoner's wage is around £8, even though some prisoners on the Enhanced IEP level can earn more than £20 a week, the recommended 10% deduction will not generate much of a revenue stream.

As it is, prisoners already have to pay for essentials such as phone credit, postage, toiletries, etc., as well as buying from the canteen (prison shop) luxuries such as soft loo paper and foods to supplement the bland and often inedible prison meals. Then there is paying for television hire and tobacco for those who've earned the privilege of an in-cell television or the right to smoke. Add to that the fact that these prison jobs are not evenly distributed around the prison estate and therefore many prisoners languish on the unemployed rate of £2.50 a week, even if they actually want to work, so to shackle them with a 10% victims' deduction on top of all that will prove the last straw for many a hard-up lag.

Clarke has also suggested that prisoners might eventually be paid the minimum wage, but this appears to be wishful thinking, as the main reason why companies use prison labour is that it is cheap and most of the work is the sort of very low-skill piecework that they cannot make a profit out of when paying ordinary workers.

Another of the CJS proposals that Clarke looks like adopting is the suggestion that Contract Services – the sector of the Prison Industries workshops that carry out contracts for private companies, and which earned the Prison Service in England and Wales a measly £7.08 million in sales in 2007/08 – is doubled in size from around 4,500 (the CSJ underestimate this, using old HMPS data). Yet where the new workshops that would be needed are going to come from is anyone's guess, given the squeeze on the capital budget and a lack of available space in existing prisons. Scrap education and then convert the empty classrooms maybe?



● Bristol once again reinforces its reputation as a thriving hub of a political activity. Anarchists connected to Bristol Anarchist Federation have upped the stakes and issued a challenge to the UK anarchist movement under the banner **Anarchists Against The Cuts**, which they see as a way for groups and individuals uniting to form a visible and uncompromising part of the fight against the cuts.

They declare: "We do not have a membership, we do not have a fancy logo, we do not have formal meetings, we do not have newspapers to sell or a Facebook group to like. We are simply a campaign with one aim 'No Cuts, No Compromise, By All Means Necessary!'"

See Page 5 of our last issue for Freedom's take on anarchists and the anti-cuts issue.

● Along with the anti-cuts activity in the city comes *The Autonomist*, a locally produced radical newsletter that aims to provide short news updates on local campaigns, and an extensive, up-to-date listing of local groups, spaces, and upcoming events. To get in touch, email BristolAutonomist@gmail.com, or visit: <http://bristolautonomist.blogspot.com/>

● To coincide with the **International Day of Solidarity for comrades in Chile** (24th September) for those currently being persecuted by the State, a number of anarchists and sympathisers from various parts of London converged on the busy shopping centre in the

Elephant and Castle (pictured above), chosen because of the thousands of people from Latin American countries living in the area. After dropping banners over the main entrance in solidarity with the Chilean Mapuche Indian hunger strikers, fighting against corporations in protection of their land, the 14 anarchists arrested in Chile, they dispersed into and around the shopping centre and local market giving out hundreds of leaflets in English and Spanish.

In Bristol an unnamed group took to the streets in the early hours of the 28th of September and attacked the NatWest bank on Gloucester road with paint and bricks. Windows were smashed, paintbombs thrown and 'destroy all prisons' was sprayed up on the wall. In a communiqué they explain the action was taken in solidarity with the Mapuche prisoners, the three incarcerated in Switzerland and the imprisoned Chile anarchists – the majority of which are on hunger strike.

Not to be outdone, an unnamed group in London attacked Santander Bank, owned by Spanish bosses, in Jubilee Way, Wimbledon on Sunday 26th September. Windows were smashed, cash machines damaged with glue and slogans of support paint sprayed on the walls also in solidarity with the arrested Chilean anarchists (reported previously in *Freedom*) and the Mapuche prisoners currently on hunger strike.

See page 7 of this issue for background to the Mapuche Indians situation.

The Rivonia Trial

The Rivonia Trial took place between 1963 and 1964, in which ten leaders of the African National Congress, including Nelson Mandela, were tried for 221 acts of sabotage against the apartheid system. Hendrick Verwoerd was the Prime Minister of South Africa at the time and was known as 'the architect of apartheid'. This article by Bill Christopher originally appeared in *Freedom* on 20th June 20th 1964.

Verwoerd found Guilty

Nelson Mandela and six other anti-apartheid militants have been sentenced to a living death; they could have been hanged but the South African authorities are shrewder than that. As was stated at the trial there was no intention of making them martyrs.

The South African Government has been building up for this trial since 11th July 1963, when the special branch raided Goldreich farm in Rivonia and captured six of the anti-apartheid militants. Mandela was already in prison serving a five year sentence for leading the three-day general strike in May 1962.

Since the 'Rivonia' arrests the accused have been held for interrogation under the notorious 'no-trail' law (General Law Amendment Act of 1963). Kept in solitary confinement, forbidden to read or write or speak to anyone, even the prison staff, they have been subjected to constant inquisitions by the police special branch, threats and attempted bribes designed to make them 'confess' or become police informers. In addition to such mental torture, designed to break down the personality of the victim, many ugly reports have leaked out of actual physical brutality by these special branch police against those detained under the 'no-trial' law.

When the 11 accused appeared in Court on 9th October, Abram Fischer QC, appearing for most of them, asked for a remand of at least a month. He said that after 88 days of solitary confinement, interrogations, threats and attempted bribery, they were not in a fit state to stand trial. He drew attention to the 'haggard and drawn' appearance of the accused.

Mandela, a robust man and amateur boxer, had lost at least 30 pounds in weight. Sisulu also, though he has experienced prison many times, had the appearance of having endured a terrible ordeal, and so did nearly all the others. The prosecutor, Dr Yutar, opposed



Above, those sentenced to life imprisonment, among them ANC leader Nelson Mandela, leave the Palace of Justice in Pretoria on 16th June 1964; below, protesters face police outside the court room where the Rivonia Trial took place.

Mr Fischer's application, but the Judge, Mr Justice de Wet, allowed postponement until 29th October.

Who are these men who claim to be paragons of justice? Verwoerd, Louw and Voster were self-admitted admirers of Hitler, Verwoerd was editor of the Afrikaner Nationalist newspaper, *Die Transvaler*, and was accused by another newspaper of carrying on treacherous propaganda in favour of the enemy. Verwoerd sued in Court for libel and lost. The Judge stated "He [Verwoerd] is not entitled to complain. He did make his paper a tool of the Nazis in South Africa and he knew it."

Balthazar Voster, Minister of Justice, who locks up people and charges them with treason and sabotage, spent the best part of the war period in internment. He was a member of the fascist Ossewa Brandwag, a para-military organisation which devoted itself to blow up bridges, cut telephone wires and otherwise assist the German forces against South Africa [*South Africa on Trial*, an ANC pamphlet]. These leopards have not changed their spots. South Africa's leading Opposition newspaper in Johannesburg, the *Rand Daily Mail*, which is anti-apartheid, describes the Rivonia trial sentence as "wise and just" and goes on to say that "the men found guilty had organised sabotage on a wide scale and had plotted armed revolution." This bloody lip service to anti-apartheid makes one vomit. How often must one get kicked in the guts (literally) before doing something about it.

In 1946 African mine workers of Witwatersrand came out on strike, after repeated efforts of the Union leadership to

negotiate or even to evoke a reply to their numerous letters to the Chamber of Mines. They were met with truncheons and bullets. Nine miners were killed, 1248 wounded. In 1960 unarmed Africans demonstrating against pass laws in Sharpsville and Cape Town were shot down by the police, in massacres which horrified the world. One can go on and on. 90 days detention law which can go on forever without trial. Slave labour on farms where animals receive better treatment.

Does the imprisonment of the seven militants mean that opposition to apartheid in South Africa has been broken? Temporary set back possibly, beaten – never.

That the Verwoerd government should feel the need to close ranks suggests that they do not underestimate the African opposition – even though they boast of having "broken its back". That in spite of the frank admission of guilt by its prisoners to charges amounting to treason it does not exact the full penalty of the law, indicates that they were not sure what might have happened if they had. It is surely significant that the South African government shows more respect for the person of a Nelson Mandela than for all the resolutions of the United Nations.

If and when South Africa's 14 million non-whites succeed in freeing themselves from domination by the white minority (3.5 million) it will be by their own efforts and not resolutions in the United Nations and pious protests on the steps of St. Paul's. Mandela and his friends have assumed the leadership of struggle. They don't need our bundles of petitions and protests. What they do need is material help of every kind.



REVIEWS

WHAT'S ON

OCTOBER

■ **9th Electric Circus for Gaza!** an indoor festival or Lunity, gathering underground party crews to raise funds to send a circus to Gaza with the convoy, at The Scala, Kings Cross, London N1 9NL from 10pm until 6am, see circus2gaza.org.uk, skandalous.org or call 07958 182630 for details.

■ **9th Benefit for the family of Ian Tomlinson**, an all-day, eclectic showcase of local and national talent held across two stages at King Edward VII Music Venue, 63 Aylsham Road, Norwich, NR3 2HF from noon until midnight – all proceeds raised will be donated to the Tomlinson family for further campaigning and/or legal fees, for more see justiceforthetomlinsonsdays.org.uk

■ **13th A mass siege of EDO MBM/ITT** – despite the victory of the Decommissioners, EDO still produces weapons parts at Home Farm Road, Brighton, and protests continue (please arrive on the 12th as there will be convergence space available), siege starts at 10am at a venue to be announced, call 07538093930, email smashedo@riseup.net or see smashedo.org.uk/hammertime.htm

■ **16th No Borders South Wales benefit gig** at Stow Hill, Newport NP20 1JB from 7.30pm, £5, email noborderswales@riseup.net or see <http://noborderswales.org.uk/2010/07/22/benefit-gig-on-16th-october/>

■ **16th The Crude Awakening**, a day of mass action in central London against the oil industry, brought to you by Space Hijackers, Plane Stupid, Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination, Climate Camp, Rising Tide, Liberate Tate – now oil's time is up, let's give the oil industry a really Crude Awakening, see crudeawakening.org.uk for details.

■ **23rd London Anarchist Bookfair**, for all your radical requirements including books, talks, t-shirts, food and so much more... from 10am until 7pm at Queen Mary, University of London, Mile End Road, London E1 4NS, see anarchistbookfair.org.uk for details.

■ **23rd and 24th Stop Nuclear Power Network national gathering**, a campaign to stop the building of a new nuclear reactor at Hinkley, near Bristol, the gathering will be at a venue in Bristol to be announced, for details see stophinkley.org or <http://stopnuclearpoweruk.net> or email nonewnuclear@aktivix.org

■ **30th West Midlands Vegan Festival** from 11am until 5pm at The Wolves Civic, North Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1RG see www.midlandsveganfestival.org.uk or call 01527 458395 for details. The first 200 visitors get a free goodie bag!

NOVEMBER

■ **1st Devonport Big Blockade** at Devonport Dockyard and nuclear submarine base, Plymouth, crash space and food available, see website for more details, times, etc., at tridentploughshares.org/article1608, and for NVDA training beforehand call 08454 588363.

CONFERENCE

Steady State 2010

It is not unreasonable to say that some of the most active explorations of alternatives to capitalism at the moment come not from the Left but from a wing of liberalism. Though it has been around for thirty years now, steady state economics is a topic fast gaining traction among those looking for a way out of the existing system.

This year's conference in Leeds is likely to be considered a pivotal moment in the development of this movement. Attended by over a hundred people from grassroots campaigners to academics to NGOs, it could even be the start of a breakout into the mainstream.

Steady state, or 'no-growth' economics pretty much does what it says on the tin. In line with anti-capitalism and climate justice movements, it challenges the notion that growth is good. However, its attractiveness lies in the fact that it is not just saying that unchecked growth is bad, but that it is active in finding alternatives, in a way that does not involve the simple austerity approaches of the current government.

Central to it is challenging GDP as the measure the economic health of a country, providing valid arguments for replacing it with other indicators of progress or well-being. Similarly, there is a strong understanding that there is a lot to be gained from a society where the difference between the top and bottom of society is greatly reduced.

A key feature is that the model requires a stable population, an issue with considerable pitfalls which were remarkably well handled by speakers. The Optimum Population Trust gave a workshop but it appears that their



dubious policies around migration did not gain much traction.

There was much of interest that a short review cannot do justice to. One outcome of a number of workshops was the importance of the cooperative model of organising, and attacks on the nature of advertising. Elsewhere ideas came close to parecon models.

Politically, it was social liberalism, at times bordering on socialism. Nevertheless, there is much for anarchists to learn from it and vice versa. There was a startling lack of power analysis, leading to a dependence on governments to act as regulators, but this need not have to be the case.

Overall, a very interesting conference with many ideas of interest to anarchists that we will be seeing much more of in the future.

Donal O'Driscoll

For more information on the conference including, at some point, videos of presentations, see <http://steadystate.org/leeds2010/>

ABOUT ANARCHISM

Nicolas Walter with an introduction by Natasha Walter

The case for anarchism as a pragmatic political philosophy is explained in this new edition of the classic work by Nicolas Walter, who was a writer, journalist and active protester against the power of the state. It has often been reprinted and translated into many languages, including French, Spanish, Japanese, Serbo-Croat, Chinese, Polish and Russian.

available at £4.20 (post free) from
Freedom Press, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. That unless he dropped the matter he would end up "like Dr David Kelly, who was found dead in the woods with his wrist slashed."
2. The excrement of sperm whales contains a very high mineral content which includes a lot of iron. The iron fuels the growth of phytoplankton which absorb CO₂.
3. He said "The oil hasn't disappeared – it's either been dispersed or is unaccounted

for, which are completely different things. In fact, the only thing that has gone is the international pressure on BP and the US government. And that, of course, has nothing to do with an efficient clean-up operation and everything to do with a Kafkaesque PR exercise."

4. Chair of Vertex, a private equity company specialising in... business process outsourcing. No conflict of interest there, then!

Cagey looks

Tom Jennings finds that there's rather more than meets the eyes in this entertaining, if excessively clunky, Argentine crime drama

The Secret In Their Eyes initially resembles a derivative cop caper, with retired prosecutor's assistant Benjamin Esposito (Ricardo Darin) reminiscing about his mid-1970s partnership with Pablo Sandoval (Guillermo Francella) – wisecracking like a Hispanic Starsky and Hutch in battling the corrupt ineptitude of the Buenos Aires justice system bureaucracy just before Argentina descends into dictatorship. But the cheap and cheerful kitsch shades into strategic deployment of classic cinematic codes mimicking the mass media infiltration of experience – a cultural colonialism paralleling more obviously ominous facets of contemporaneous US interference in the region. Elements of crime procedural, romance and political thriller ambitiously cross-fertilise into what was clearly intended as a philosophical meditation on love and hate, loss, guilt and regret – but whose hysterical overkill of generic hybridity generates awkwardly manipulative shifts of tone which rarely fully convince. Still, the second-biggest audience ever within South America plus an Oscar for best foreign-language film proves its populism, with structural flexibility leaving ample questions unanswered for viewers to ponder from their own perspectives – unlike other historical revisionisms pretending to deep political portent which heavily privilege dominant agendas (like the Oscar-winning German Stasi thriller *The Lives of Others*, reviewed in *Freedom*, 16th June 2007).

Directed by Juan José Campanella – holidaying from long-running American television serials *House* and *Law & Order: SVU* – Eduardo Sacheri's 2005 novel is here adapted into melodrama contrasting diverse passions and obsessions and their intimate effects. So, revisiting the quarter-century-old cold case he never got over – the rape and slaughter of a newly-wed teacher, Liliana, whose bereft husband, Morales, trusted his premature assurance of closure – flashbacks ham up Benjamin's genuine emotional and investigative synergy with drunken genius Pablo which partly reflected shared humble origins. Dogged persistence and necessarily unofficial tactics eventually identify the psychopath responsible, and they gleefully free the immigrants framed for the crime from the venal thugs, brown-nosing buffoons and general lazy dishonesty around them. Empathetic solidarity sours, however,



thanks to Benjamin's shy infatuation with their new boss, aristocratic high-flyer Irene (Soledad Villamil), who equally hesitantly reciprocates – though neither summon the *cojones* to act. Then, a couple of years later, Benjamin threatens to make waves upon discovering that his departmental nemesis sprang Gómez – who has shown trustworthy loyalty to authoritarian power – from life sentence to a death squad, which promptly assassinates Pablo. Benjamin only escapes to a safe post in the sticks thanks to Irene's contacts; back in the present the couple decide to live together after all.

A brief encounter with history

Committed acting smoothes the film's slings and arrows of outrageous contrivance – including plot twists like the villain's football mania occasioning a remarkable chase sequence through a crowded stadium and onto the pitch during a real Racing Club game. Tired clichés and naff dialogue regularly accompany unlikely narrative developments, too – witness the prominence accorded family snapshots, Pablo's inebriated ramblings, or the mutual counselling between Morales and Benjamin. Darin's understated portrayal of the latter's careworn idealism, remembering the past during the running time's bulk, anchors the whole mess yet – especially as Irene regularly disputes the details – we can't trust these memories. Are they supposed to be accurate; or merely badly embellished reconstructions in his hack novelisation? Or, is such uncertainty inherent in the human condition, in which case the film-makers may have faithfully rendered it. The outcome, indeed, surely hints at social and official constraints on perception and understanding, influencing immediate action as well as retrospective assimilation in

individual biography and collective history – and, as such, could resonate in principle with anyone's shared suffering.

Despite the background here – the colonels' junta and 'disappearances' of thousands after the Peronist government's chaotic degeneration – being particularly vicious and pernicious, Campanella emphasises that the desperate political situation was only the context for the human story, which is presumably supposed to carry more weight than any historical specificities (such as today's tendency to slide from fear of terrorism into escalating erosions of liberty). The story therefore begins before the worst fascist excesses, when existing modes of repression steadily became more organised and institutionalised while many chose to keep quiet, avoid awareness, and run away from confrontation. But, whether facilitating dystopia at the time or unravelling its genesis later, the question is begged whose attitudes, situations and potential are allowed to count. Here, lower-class like Gómez, Morales and Liliana had no protection against his brutal reality from rich families or elite sponsors allowing them the guilty luxury of disavowing the distress of others. Whereas, like his erstwhile quarry, Benjamin effectively 'got out of jail free'. If his relationship with Irene stretches to represent social democracy's uneasy coalition of professional middle-classes and progressive upper-classes, then their eventual personal 'truth and reconciliation' still leaves the grieving widower dealing with the fallout – dominated by the repercussions our paramours blithely imagine they've satisfactorily resolved in their upwardly mobile trajectory to heaven.

Moreover, liberal pretensions utterly failed to secure meaningful 'justice' – our protagonists' entire shambolic careers as well as private



Review

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lives, by implication, complete wastes of time. Nevertheless, the film's fluffy 'coming to terms with the past' denouement, trumping time-honoured Hollywood unconsummated love, doubtless delighted award-voters faced with uncompromising refusals of bourgeois uplift in Michael Haneke's *The White Ribbon* and Jacques Audiard's *A Prophet*. But specific historical circumstances reveal another open secret in this story's eyes. Its brave new world of affectionate national partnership – having settled unfinished business from the dark days of Dirty War – embarks in 1999. Yet within two years Argentina's casino capitalism catastrophically crashed – much

earlier than elsewhere – leaving millions of lives again in ruins. Wishing away the material foundations of social crisis – whether reflected in ignoring the massive industrial and political unrest across 1970s Latin America crushed with CIA backing, conflicting class interests and experiences among the film's characters, or its reception as a serious statement on the transcendence of communal trauma – thus merely increases the likelihood that projected solutions remain flimsy fantasies, destined to precipitate tragedy and farce as well as critical acclaim.

www.tomjennings.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk
<http://libcom.org/blog/4271>

The Secret In Their Eyes will be released on DVD on 24th January 2011.

THE QUIZ

1. When a senior doctor in Norwich raised concerns about the local PFI hospital, what was the response of an unnamed press officer there?
2. What unlikely biological process has recently been observed to remove about 400,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide a year?
3. According to wildlife guide and TV presenter Mark Carwardine, what has happened to the oil that BP and the US government claims has gone from the Gulf oil spill?
4. Before the election, Cameron's adviser Sir Peter Gershon said that "all back office transactional functions will be outsourced within 18 months." What other job does he have?

Answers on page 14

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miners last generation



Above left, miners on the march; above right, Orgreave; below left, women protesting against pit closures at a rally in London, June 1984; below right, Dave Douglass outside Hatfield Colliery in a sit-down to block the route of the scab-carrying bus in August 1984.

struggle, to fight for a better understanding of the cause of women's liberation, and to improve the consciousness of the miners and see other people's struggles as related.

On not having a national ballot

One thing that has dumbfounded most of the subsequent writers and contemporary observers of this great movement is the actual structure of the miners' union. Without an understanding of this, it's hard for anyone to gauge how things happened. The NUM is not as its title suggests a 'national union' in the ordinary meaning of the phrase ... It was a federation of separate areas and constituent bodies, each self-governing and individually registered as independent unions in their own right...

Our plan was to achieve a *de facto* national strike of area strikes. This had not been planned as such; it was simply the way the struggle evolved. Some on the NEC thought the rolling strike would be an initial phase to be endorsed by national individual ballot later as the strike gained momentum. However, when branches were polled at mass pithead meetings, as to approval for such a ballot or not, the overwhelming majority of branches, and through them areas, voted to reject such a national ballot as unnecessary...

From the beginning, defying the strike or it making it a point of principle – 'no ballot no strike' – was always an excuse for cowardice. The issue and the fact of the strike was far more important than how it was achieved ... One historic fact, which must be made clear, is that the NEC and the National leadership under the chairmanship of Arthur Scargill made no recommendation to reject a national ballot ... when put to the vote, it achieves 69 in favour and 54 against. The decision *not* to have a national ballot

carried. It is carried by an exhausting debate and exploration of opinions by all areas, all constituent parts and all branches. It is a democratic decision.

On political groups

When I came to start up the Beecham's Miners Support Group, with financial sponsorship from Class War, and militant anarchist and gays and lesbians group Wolverine down in London, Spot and the lads were all too glad to meet visiting delegations and accept donations. Most of it went on beer rather than food, but that was their choice ... As the strike continued and picketing became more vexed, Class War and the London Anarchists also dropped us special orders as we requested them, a consignment of Black Widow catapults and boxes of steel ball bearings. A prize group of volunteers in a flying hit squad made full use of these...

On the battle of Orgreave

Arthur [Scargill] called a secret planning meeting up in the national executive office. I was one of the esteemed conspirators, along with ... representatives from all the striking coalfields clustered around the table on which sat a big and actual plan of the Orgreave coking plant. The plan for 18th June involved mobilising all the pickets nationwide, and as many workers as we could muster on the same day, at the same time, with the 'Close the Gates' determination which shut Saltley and batted down the loose corners of the 1972 strike. We would split into three forces. Arthur would lead group one at the top gate, the rest of the country, north Yorkshire and Barnsley would attack the bottom gate, while I would lead Doncaster and south Yorkshire from two assembly points into the rear of the plant and take the loading bays...

Just as we approached the back of the plant, the great throng of South Yorkshire men appeared over the old pit tip and charged down to meet us ... There was no time for ripostes, the back doors were open and in we charged, trashing trains and loosing the bottoms out of waiting trucks of coal and coke. Suddenly a thin line of short-shield cops, their long batons over their heads, marched in a single line abreast towards us. Barry Miller, the diehard Goldthorpe secretary, ran to a pile of abandoned fence posts and picked one up and shouted "C'mon lads – we can play this game", and a number of us picked up lumps of wood and stakes and advanced towards the cops. Two or three of the police dogs were now bounding about and barking and falling over themselves and clearly scared shitless at the angry herd of men marching towards them, chanting "Oot! Oot! Oot! Oot!" like a tribal blood bond.

On the miners themselves

There are 150,000 individual stories of the strike. That year, how it impacted on individual families in all of its tragic, proud, gut-wrenching, comic, exhilarating, fearful, desperate, heroic and indescribable emotional variants is another story. That story, told well and in necessary detail, would fill volumes and every page would resist the gross stereotyping of the strikers which the media, sympathetic as well as hostile, have made out for us since the strike has ended. Very few strikers or their families ever went near a picket line. For those that did, few pickets were ever violent, and most were humdrum and boring, at least until the government decided to open up a second front by seeking to put a scab into every pit. Then an occupation army arrived and all the paraphernalia of flying pickets and